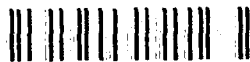


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THE INTERWAR PERIOD: LESSONS FROM THE PAST

BY

Colonel Lonnie B. Adams III  
United States Army

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**THE INTERWAR PERIOD: LESSONS FROM THE PAST**

**AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT**

**by**

**Colonel Lonnie B. Adams III**

**Colonel Charles S. Rousek  
Project Advisor**

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**U.S. Army War College  
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# ABSTRACT

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After the end of the Cold War, the United States Army is facing the prospect of a new interwar period in which the lack of a threat and economic and political concerns may cause a major reduction of resources for the Army. The interwar period of the 1920's and the 1930's can provide the Army some useful lessons in the event the period replicates itself in the 21st Century. Those lessons derive not from the well-established fact that the nation failed to provide the Army the necessary resources to remain a robust, modernized force; rather those lessons derive from the fact that the Army failed to balance its scarce resources. The Army at that time made choices which caused it to become undermanned and overstructured, unready, unsustainable, and unmodernized. This paper challenges the reader to explore the lessons learned from this period and apply them to the Army of the 21st Century as it confronts a new interwar era.



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## INTRODUCTION

After winning the Cold War the United States is on the brink of a new interwar period. Just as in the first interwar period of the 1920's and 1930's, the United States in the 1990's appears to be politically and economically unwilling to support a large defense establishment. The welcome-home parades of the victorious army from Kuwait in 1991 resembled the welcome-home parades for the victorious troops from France in 1919. Likewise, the American public in 1992, as in 1920, is looking forward to a period of prolonged peace and normalcy.

Will the Army of the 21st Century, like the Army of the previous interwar period, repeat the mistakes of that era? The answer is no, if the Army is permitted to follow its strategy to build a smaller, ready force. That goal assumes, however, Congress will furnish the Army the necessary resources. But, if this assumption is false, the Army will have to make radical adjustments to its future plans. In that event the interwar period of the 1920's and 1930's can provide the Army with some useful lessons for two reasons. First, it was a period lacking a viable national military strategy and possessing a flawed process for translating that strategy into resources. More importantly, it was a period when the Army failed to balance its scarce resources among, what is now called, the four pillars of defense - structure, readiness, sustainment, and modernization. This paper explores this era and encourages the reader to reflect on and draw comparisons to the interwar period to assist the Army in avoiding the mistakes of the 1920's and 30's.

## BACKGROUND

GENERAL. In the summer of 1989, the Department of the Army's (DA) Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations (ODCSOPs) tasked the US Army's Center of Military History "to provide a study on mobilization and training considerations during the Great Depression." ODCSOPs speculated that perhaps some parallels existed between this era and the period in which the US Army was entering. Shortly thereafter, however, ODCSOPs abandoned the study believing there were really no useful similarities between the era of the Great Depression and the 1990's. Specifically, ODCSOP's rationale was the Army in the 1930's had a growing threat instead of a reduced, ill-defined threat facing the Army of the 1990's; the Army in the 1930's had to operate in a declining economy instead of the growing, healthy economy of the 1990's; and the United States in the 1930's had a small, under-resourced Army instead of a relatively larger and more robust Army.<sup>1</sup>

However, the world has changed since 1989 and similarities do exist to allow for an expanded study of the entire interwar period of the 1920's and 1930's. At the same time, to be useful, the Army must acknowledge the possibility that it may face a reduction in capability as dramatic as the Army faced during the interwar period.

The history of the Army during the interwar period is not as well-documented nor as well-analyzed as the Army in most other eras. The Army during this era is often evaluated in the context

of how the Congress and the President failed to provide the resources required to prepare for World War II.<sup>2</sup> Congressional hearings in the 1940's tried to affix blame for the Army's poor state of readiness by focusing on who did not ask for what and when. The Army today is applying many of the lessons it learned from the mobilization for and the fighting of World War II in its structuring the force for the coming decade. This relationship is being used, quite rightly, to justify the resources needed for an orderly and effective reduction of the Army force. The battle cry of "no more Kasserine Passes" is probably more applicable for the Army leadership in today's downsizing than the battle cry of "no more Task Force Smiths." As opposed to 1950 when the Army was still, relative to rest of the world, well-equipped, manned, and experienced from World War II, 1940 found the United States Army a third rate military power unable to match the might of the world's major powers.

The underlying assumption for today's downsizing is that Congress and the President will not commit the same blunders as were committed after World War I; i.e., our nation will maintain a modernized, ready, and sustainable force, albeit smaller. The circumstances are similar to those found in 1920 when Congress enacted the National Defense Act authorizing an Army strength of 280,000 men, a force which was never achieved. In addition, the belief that the circumstances in which we find ourselves today are not the same as the interwar period is similarly untrue when the Army of the 1920's and 30's found itself undermanned,

overstructured, unready, unsustainable, and unmodernized.<sup>3</sup>

Paralleling the 1920's and 1930's, the threats the United States faces today are reduced and less well-defined; the economy is weak; and the Army faces the growing prospect the political leadership will reduce its size beyond a level which it feels is prudent and necessary for the nation's defense.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW. The period between World War I and World War II was challenging for both the nation and the Army. After its success in World War I, the United States had established itself as a major world power bringing about a general sense of economic and political optimism. The Army shared in the optimism believing its decisive role in winning the war assured it an important place as one of the nation's premier institutions.

The National Defense Act of 1920 appeared to have confirmed that status. Central to this legislation was a three-fold increase in size of the Army to 280,000 men compared to the Army of 1916. The statutory increase was half of that sought by General March, the Army Chief of Staff, and General Pershing who wanted over 500,000 men, an Army suitable for a world power. Nevertheless, it was a sizeable increase reflecting a fundamental change for the Army. It appeared that the Army was changing from a constabulary force engaged in Indian wars and patrolling the American-Mexican border to a world power.

Included in this Act and subsequent amendments was a change in the status of the National Guard to both a state and federal reserve force with primary emphasis on its federal mission. This



change also required the War Department to conduct unit versus individual mobilization of the National Guard.<sup>4</sup> The Act created for the first time an Organized Reserve Component from which the Active Army would be able to draw officers and enlisted men to fill its individual mobilization needs.<sup>5</sup> Initially, this component was filled by veterans of the war, but gradually the Reserve Officer Training Component (ROTC) program played an increasingly important role in meeting the needs for initial entry officers. The War Department, however, neglected the Enlisted Reserve Corps during the interwar period. At its peak, there were only 3,000 enlisted reserves during this period.<sup>6</sup>

The American political psyche, however, held three convictions which prevented the fulfillment of the Act. First, the United States still held to the inclination of isolationism. Americans believed that with the defeat of Germany there was little likelihood of a major land war in the future. Consequently, the American people quickly withdrew their willingness to support an Army any larger than was needed to defend the United States, its overseas territories, and its possessions. At best, the American citizen only grudgingly accepted the necessity for a minimally-sized Army adequate for training its voluntary citizen components and for preserving a basic knowledge of military science.<sup>7</sup>

The second conviction was the United States' long standing aversion for maintaining a large standing Army, supported by the belief that, when necessary, the citizen soldier would volunteer

to meet the nation's needs.<sup>8</sup> That had been the case since the Revolutionary War through the First World War. Additionally Americans regarded the need for a strong Army as a poor second choice to a strong Navy. In the eyes of the American citizen, the Navy provided the first line of defense for the "island" nation.<sup>9</sup>

The third belief stemming from the horrors of World War I was the attraction of pacifism throughout the United States and the world. In the 1920's, pacifist groups went so far as to have young men sign pledges not to volunteer for the Army regardless of the cause.<sup>10</sup> Even when faced with the realistic possibility of a threat as late as 1940, the United States Congress barely enacted the draft to meet the rising manpower needs of the Army.

When these views were coupled to the perceived lack of a threat during most of the interwar period, there seemed little reason for the government or the American people to invest in an Army required by the National Defense Act of 1920. Secondly, the large stocks of materiel procured but never used for the one-million man World War I Army undercut the need for the 150,000-man interwar Army to obtain newer and more advanced replacement equipment. Finally, with the Great Depression of the 1930's, the Army yielded to the budget constraints which it had never fully accepted nor planned for.<sup>11</sup>

## NATIONAL MILITARY STRATEGY AND THE BUDGET

Americans viewed the First World War as an aberration. For the first time in its history, the United States had participated in coalition warfare, requiring major deployments of ground forces for combat overseas. American citizens still did not believe the circumstances had so changed that the United States would require large land forces to defend US interest overseas, particularly in advance of a direct threat to the territorial United States. Policy makers believed the nation could achieve national security by maintaining a minimum of defensive military strength and avoiding entangling alliances either in or out of the League of Nations. Concurrently, the United States followed the strategy of entering agreements promoting international peace and limiting armaments.<sup>12</sup>

For twenty years, Army planners had no clearly articulated national security goals for the nation. As such, there was no apparent conflict between the Army's perception of national security policy and the Army's understanding of its mission during the 1920's and early 1930's. During the interwar period, military leaders believed that they had the following military missions: defense of the continental United States, Alaska, Hawaii, and the Panama Canal; defense of the Monroe Doctrine; defense of the Philippines; and protection of American rights and interests in China. Only the defense of the Philippines and protection of American interests in China caused Army leaders difficulty, with the Navy taking a more expansive view, the Army

a more limited view.<sup>13</sup> By 1931, the Chief of the Army's War Plans Division advised the Chief of Staff that the Army's main mission under which it was organized, trained, and equipped was the defense of the continental United States.<sup>14</sup>

Throughout this period there never was a real anticipation of hostilities. War planning in the 1920's and 1930's were abstract academic exercises, representing actions which were politically supportable and militarily favorable. The basic plan developed during this period, the Orange plan, anticipated operations against Japan with the Navy holding a line west of the Alaska-Hawaii-Panama strategic triangle.<sup>15</sup> In the early 30's, General Stanley Embick, reflecting on the prevailing American mood of isolationism, argued against the Army playing any substantive role in supporting the Philippines after its independence. He recognized that the Army was ill-equipped to provide a defense for the islands and argued for the US Army's withdrawal, over the objections of MacArthur.<sup>16</sup>

Throughout the 30's, the War Department had serious doubts about whether the United States should risk fighting the Japanese in the western Pacific. Finally, in the autumn of 1935, Army planners took the position that the United States should not defend the Philippines nor attempt to retake them. In their minds, the risks involved in relying on an indefensible base would invite a disaster. The 1938 edition of the Orange Plan represented a compromise between the Navy's offensive strategy and the Army's defensive strategy. The compromise reflected the

contradictions and restrictions of national policy and public opinion. The nation refused relinquishing the Philippines while it resisted providing the Army the means to guarantee its defense.<sup>17</sup>

Not only did isolationism hamper the Army on the military strategic front, but the Army also faced another form of isolationism on the bureaucratic front. Part of that isolationism was based upon the Army's belief that its sole role was to provide military advice on national security policy.<sup>18</sup> When confronted with a lack of policy guidance, military planners took a narrow approach in their planning, basing their plans on what they perceived was in the nation's interest and compatible with the administration's intent.<sup>19</sup>

A second part was institutional. The absence of any permanent coordinating agency also prevented the Army from explaining important military aspects involving foreign policy. As early as 1922, the services recommended a joint board with the State Department to provide guidance on national strategy and military policy; but the administration rejected the suggestion fearing it would give the military too much influence on foreign policy. At the crisis level the services and other branches of government appeared to coordinate closely; at the policy level, however, there remained a lack of coordination and consultation. The problem of interagency coordination was left unsolved. Beginning in 1940, though, the service secretaries and chiefs were permitted to bypass the State Department and report directly

to the President.<sup>20</sup>

TRANSLATION OF STRATEGY INTO BUDGETS. It was apparent during the 1920's and 1930's the Army did not have the resources to achieve its perceived national security goals, narrow as they were. The Army viewed the issue as not how to maximize security with the available funds but how to minimize uncertainty with additional, but unavailable resources. In essence the availability of funds determined policy and caused the Army to adopt a restrained approach in its strategic and tactical thinking.

In applying the Army's strategic concept to budgets during this period, the Army displayed routine, disciplined obedience in first requesting then living by the President's and Budget Director's recommendation for appropriations. In the Army's opinion, the anti-war feelings of the American public made it impossible for the Army to obtain the minimum amount of political and budget support needed for national defense.<sup>21</sup> This was especially true during the Depression, in which successive Chiefs of Staff subordinated the Army's needs to help first Hoover, then Roosevelt, meet their budget goals. Not until MacArthur, at the end of his term as Chief of Staff, did the Army make any vocal objections.<sup>22</sup>

The Army may have set the stage for this subordination when the General Staff, in briefing President Hoover in 1929, noted that the world situation, both currently and in the foreseeable future, was quiet and that there were no outstanding issues which would require "immediate military preparations."<sup>23</sup> The General

Staff's view that there was no great threat to the nation assumed the country had allies if war broke out and the Navy would control the seas while the country mobilized the manpower and industrial might the Army needed.<sup>24</sup> These discussions were ongoing at the same time the Army was attempting to justify the doubling of its military budget between 1916 and 1930. The Army's explanation was the budget increases were associated with the newly formed Air Corps, new equipment such as aircraft, artillery, antiaircraft artillery, automatic rifles, machine guns, and the mechanization of the force.<sup>25</sup> No mention was made of increased personnel costs.

Nevertheless, the War Department was obliged by law to support the President's budget request before the Congress. Army officials often viewed with alarm the growing deterioration of the Army; however, they were unwilling to confront administration officials publicly and they knowingly submitted budget requests not meeting the Army's needs. Prior to 1938 the Bureau of the Budget rarely had the War Department justify its requests while arbitrarily slashing those requests based on its own analysis. Likewise Congress was less than willing to investigate the sufficiency of the administration's requests. The Secretaries of War and the Chiefs of Staff of those years sounded warnings enough in their annual reports, but few read those reports and, of those who read them, fewer still were influenced by them.<sup>26</sup>

The mechanics involved in preparing the War Department budget was another factor which tended to keep military

expenditures to a minimum. Budget preparations became more routine as the budget of one year tended to become the budget of the next, perpetuating the underfunding. In fact this process denied the Army the opportunity to formulate mid- to long-term objectives. The Army was inclined to plan on what was acceptable to the Administration and Congress for the current fiscal year and not plan on what was needed.<sup>27</sup> In a sense, protecting the status quo was valued more highly than improving the current force. This attitude resulted in stagnant thinking by the General Staff as the Army would seek to fund only its highest priority items without seeking additional appropriations for lesser items. An example of this outlook was the Army's lackluster attempts in 1931 to obtain funds for development of a modern, mechanized force.<sup>28</sup>

From time to time, various officers would propose the adoption of a radical reorganization, e.g., a separate Air Force, the combination of the coastal and field artillery, or the adoption of a new tactical doctrine so that defense dollars would be spent more rationally. However, the General Staff refused to reassess its doctrine or organization, believing that any change would be costly as well as unsound. Furthermore, each division and branch of the War Department was jealous of its allotted funds and was reluctant to undertake any reappraisal; constant budgetary pressure instilled a resistance to change, especially towards any new, possibly expensive idea.<sup>29</sup>

There are many examples of how the Army attempted to link



its budget to a military strategy. One case was when President Hoover at the beginning of his administration in 1929 asked the War Department to arrive at a budget estimate which would provide adequate defense at a modest level of expenditure. In accordance with the President's order, the Chief of Staff, General Charles Summerall, conducted a survey in which he asked all his Corps Area commanders and Chiefs of Branches and Bureaus to conduct a critical reappraisal of their commands to see where savings could be made. Summerall's nine point program to accomplish this reassessment indicated that he wanted his subordinates to provide a frank and fresh appraisal of military policy. He realized this survey would serve as the basis for the President in his reexamination of American military policy. Among the principles Summerall laid out as a basis for this survey were: the force had to be small, highly trained, and capable of providing defense in an emergency; the force had to be capable of producing the nucleus for training and mobilizing a larger force; the force structure had to be compatible with the current international situation; and force costs must be in harmony with the government's ability to meet its domestic and defense needs.

The responses he received from his subordinates reflected a general reluctance to change the status quo or to reduce any military activities within their purview. Only General Heintzleman, the Commandant of the Command and General Staff School, offered the advice that the Army should restate its mission so this mission would match the appropriations and

strength of the Army. Very few of the other senior officers were able to grasp this point. Instead, the majority, including the future Chief of Staff, MG MacArthur, demonstrated an amazing lack of concern for the needs of the Army as a whole by vigorously defending their own organizational activities and programs. The Assistant Secretary of War also took a different point of view suggesting the futility in assuming the Army could gain Congress's support for all its various projects. The end result he felt would only be the partial funding for all of the projects. The Assistant Secretary recommended the Army evaluate what expenditure seemed possible, and based upon that figure, determine the military program it would follow. The War Plans Division was tasked to formulate the War Department's consolidated response. In its response, the Department avoided making recommendations involving reorganization, new doctrine, or lowering costs. Instead the Department justified its current budget figure by stressing the vital role the Regular Army played in training and equipping the civilian components.<sup>30</sup>

A second example was General MacArthur's actions in face of the budget reduction attempts in 1933 when the Bureau of the Budget made an additional cut of 80 million dollars to the Army's budget, a 15% decrease. This decrease would have forced sizeable manpower reductions especially in the Regular Army officer corps, i.e., a 20% cutback. MacArthur met continued resistance in his opposition to these cuts. In a final effort, MacArthur threatened to resign if Roosevelt refused to reinstate the curtailed funds

and to take the issue to the public in a series of speeches across the country.<sup>31</sup> Despite the poor state of the Army, this marked one of the few times during the interwar period that an individual stood up to reverse an Administration's budget position. As a contemporary historian of the time noted,

*Open reports of military insufficiency became tame, tepid and extinct. One Chief of Staff was summarily recalled from the South by the authorities when he had the temerity to air to the public the disgracefully squalid housing conditions into which the potential defenders of the nation were squeezed and cooped. Reports of military authorities ceased to herald deficiencies and dangers. Instead, they gloated over their fronts on rivers and harbors, inland waterways, the Panama canal, flood control and organization and planning for industrial mobilization.<sup>32</sup>*

Who was to blame for not requesting sufficient appropriations seemed clear to those in the Army. The President and his Budget Directors always pared down the War Department's requests and then Congress usually took a portion more for good measure. As MacArthur said, "You may blame the War Department for a great many things..., but you cannot blame us for not asking for money. That is one fault to which we plead not guilty." But, the War Department seemed to operate on the margin, never asking for more than it thought it could obtain. In the final analysis there was sufficient room to blame not only the Administration and Congress for not appropriating sufficient funds to the Army, but also to the War Department for its acquiescence in recommending politically supportable budgets.<sup>33</sup>

## FOUR PILLARS OF DEFENSE

Since the early 1980's the Department of Defense has used the methodology of programming and analyzing its budgets in the context of what it calls the "Four Pillars of Defense" - Force Structure; Readiness; Sustainability; and Modernization. During the interwar period of the 1920's and 1930's no such methodology existed which perhaps was a major problem in the translation of national military strategy to budgets. Looking back today it seems appropriate that this methodology can provide a refreshing way at examining how the War Department balanced its scarce resources across the resource spectrum.

Force Structure. Force structure - the number, size, and composition of the units that constitute the Army - was one area in which the Army demonstrated inflexibility in adjusting to the reality of the budget and the nations's military strategy. The National Defense Act of 1920 was explicit, mandating three components, dividing the country into nine corps areas, and authorizing each corps a Regular Army division, two National Guard divisions, and three Reserve divisions.<sup>34</sup>

The Act of 1920 evidently put an end to the continual controversy between those who favored an expandable Regular Army advocated by Upton and Root, and those who favored a citizen Army as advocated by then Col John McAuley Palmer. The Uptonian Army was an Army built around a corps of regular professional soldiers and officers which could be expanded with volunteers in case of war. Palmer's model on the other hand favored citizen soldiers

already formed into units who would be mobilized as units in the event of an emergency. The 1920 Act created a Regular Army structured for minor contingencies and for training of reserve forces; a National Guard organized into local peacetime units who would undergo unit mobilization in the event of an emergency; and a reserve force organized and trained under prearranged plans once war began.<sup>35</sup> This arrangement presupposed a proper balance of active and reserve units that could be quickly mobilized and expanded into divisions, corps, and field armies.

The strength of the Regular Army and National Guard was fixed at 280,000 and 435,000 men respectively. That strength, however, was never realized. The Regular Army and the National Guard seldom exceeded 60 % and 40% respectively of that authorization. This structure could not work effectively at the reduced strengths especially when the total strength in the Regular Army dropped to 125,000 in the early 1930's. As was discovered at the start of World War II, corps and field Army units had to be recreated altogether when the Army began to rebuild. Instead of a lean, effective organization capable of expansion on short notice, there was, from 1920 onward, an emaciated organization incapable of expanding into a rounded field force.

When it became clear that the budget would not permit completing the nine Regular Army divisions as planned, Palmer urged that some of the divisions be abandoned so that the remainder could be filled. But, the Uptonian tradition of an

expansible Army prevailed and the General Staff departed from Palmer's plan of a ready regular Army. Rather than maintain a smaller number of units at full strength, the Army chose to retain its complete 1919 force structure of nine divisions, although few could be manned at even brigade strength. This structure not only made realistic training more difficult but foreclosed any possibility of maintaining even a very small combat-ready force.<sup>36</sup>

By the end of the 1930's, the First Cavalry and the Second Infantry divisions in the VIII Corps area at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, remained the only divisions in the Army capable of performing their mission, patrolling the Rio Grande.<sup>37</sup> As late as 1939 when the strength of the Army had increased over 30% from its interwar lows, the strength of infantry divisions were:<sup>38</sup>

<u>Division</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Shortage</u>	<u>% Fill</u>
1st	8,800	5,200	63%
2d	10,000	4,000	71%
3d	8,500	5,500	61%
4th	4,400	9,600	31%
5th	3,800	10,200	27%
6th	3,400	10,600	24%
7th	3,500	10,500	25%
8th	4,200	9,800	30%
9th	2,500	11,500	18%

The nine corps training detachments were also eliminated as a result of financial pressure. The Army had established these detachments to train the National Guard; however, they were disbanded to increase the strength of regular Army units.<sup>39</sup> Many in the Regular Army, notably MG MacArthur, attempted to give priority to training the reserve components, but the results were

uneven at best.<sup>40</sup> The end result of this action gave rise to what General Pershing had earlier warned against. The Regular Army became an ineffective expeditionary force while unwilling and unable to train the Reserve Components. By the time the 1940's arrived the National Guard had drifted back to its pre-1918 condition of unpreparedness and the organized reserves, with exception of an officer corps, disappeared.<sup>41</sup> When World War II arrived, the professional soldier expressed his usual deep skepticism about the National Guard's value because it did not possess the skills comparable to the Regular Army.<sup>42</sup>

Internally, the Army also resisted changing its structure, either for doctrinal or organizational efficiency reasons. Throughout the interwar period the Army was tied to the large four regiment "square" divisions with its emphasis on power versus mobility. It was not until late 1939 that the Army actually started to reorganize its divisional structure to the lighter, smaller three-regiment "triangular" division.<sup>43</sup>

Organizationally, the Army also failed to make reforms to the force structure which would increase its efficiency. The failure to consider consolidation of the field and coastal artillery was one example of the Army's unwillingness to effect changes to its organization even under budgetary pressure. The Army often couched its purely bureaucratic attitude in opposing consolidation as a genuine concern that such centralization would be detrimental to national defense.<sup>44</sup>

**READINESS.** The readiness of the Army during the interwar period

was abysmal. It is widely noted that there perhaps was no other period in the history of the United States in which the Army found itself so poorly manned, poorly equipped, and poorly trained.

*During the early twenties, the country had large reserves of trained manpower and usable materiel carried over from the First World War. By the thirties, however, the former had aged and lost their knack for soldiering, while the latter had become obsolete and depleted by withdrawals for current needs.<sup>45</sup>*

Throughout the interwar period the Army never had the manpower to fill its force structure. In the early 1920's part of that problem could be attributed to recruiting difficulties; however, in the 1930's as the Regular Army became even smaller and the Depression was in full bloom, it had little trouble meeting its manpower needs. Similar observations were true for the National Guard.

The problem which existed for all components was the President and the Congress failed to appropriate sufficient funds to meet the manpower and training requirements contained in the National Defense Act of 1920. Few military units in either component could be manned at a level which would enable them to carry out realistic training and exercises to maintain a high degree of practical readiness. Both the regular and reserve components were far better off in the matter of quality of personnel. The problem of quality only became acute in 1940 when rearmament and expansion revealed that many regular officers were of marginal competence or physical condition for active wartime



service and higher command. An even larger proportion of the senior National Guard and Reserve officers, then being called to active duty, had long since surpassed their level of competence and physical fitness.<sup>46</sup> As General George C. Marshall, confided to a friend before the beginning of World War II,

*The present general officers of the line are for the most part too old to command troops in battle under the terrific pressures of modern war....their minds are no longer adaptable...bodies are no longer capable of standing up under the demands of field service..The experience and judgement of these older officers can best be used in training and in maneuvers.*<sup>47</sup>

No other issue during this period brought on an outcry from Army leaders as passionate as the protection of manpower for the Regular Army. This fervent defense of its "manpower-first" policy generated among Congressional circles the suspicion the Army was using national defense as a shield to maintain its officer strength at an unduly high level. Whenever arguments were made to reduce the strength of the Regular Army, the War Department seemed quite capable in linking Regular Army manpower, particularly its officer strength, to curtailing the size and training of the National Guard. In so doing the Army was able to beat back serious attempts for further personnel reductions.<sup>48</sup>

The hostile feelings towards the manpower requirements for the Army during this period are best summarized by Senator John S. Williams of Mississippi who in 1921 said,

*..to my mind it seems obvious that there are two theories with regard to a military establishment..One would be to establish an Army to whip anybody...In order to do that we would need 2,000,000 men...The other is to pursue our traditional policy of conserving the financial resources of the people during times of*

peace and, when war comes, submit ourselves to the immense strain necessary, with the extravagance of expenditure of blood and capital both necessary, but having accomplished the purpose of keeping the people free during peace times from the burdens of war....This war has shown that you can meet the most efficient military force that the world ever dreamed of...but if in the meantime you had kept your people burdened all those 50 years, they could not have done it, they would have had neither the spirit nor the financial ability nor the morale to do it.<sup>49</sup>

Training during this period was minimal at the unit level. The best training occurred overseas in the fairly sizeable garrisons the Army maintained in Hawaii, the Philippines, and Panama.<sup>50</sup> In the United States, units were so understrength and so dispersed that the best training which could be hoped for was individual. Primarily, the stateside Regular Army focused on supervising the training of the National Guard, attending schools, and supervising the ROTC program.

Though the Regular Army was skeptical of the training Guardsmen possessed, it did offer the country at least partially trained cadres for the Guard's eighteen divisions. In addition to the Guard, the civilian community had of course a very large number of trained officers and enlisted men after World War I. This assured the Army a legitimate reserve of manpower for a decade or more after the war. By 1928, there were also over 400 ROTC units enrolling 85,000 students in colleges and universities. Regular Army officers detailed as professors of military science instructed in these units. This inexpensive program paid rich dividends for the Army when it mobilized in 1940.<sup>51</sup>

From 1920 to 1940, Officer Reserve Corps' (ORC) members received little training. Most of their training in the 1930's resulted from the reserve officers participating in the Citizens Military Training Camps (CMTTC) during the 1930's. Though they did not receive any useful tactical training, these reserve officers gained valuable leadership experience. This program strengthened the reserve officer corps as it trained over 4700 new lieutenants in these camps. At the same time, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) brought Regular Army unit training to a halt and the accompanying destruction of any semblance of unit readiness. Despite this initial and serious interference with normal Army operations, in the long run the CCC program had a beneficial effect on military preparedness. It furnished many thousands of Reserve officers with valuable training, and it provided nonmilitary but disciplined training to many thousands of young men who were to become soldiers.<sup>52</sup> All together, over 400,000 men saw some form of military training in the civilian components between the wars. The end result of the civilian training program was to be an orderly and effective mobilization of the National Guard and Reserve elements into the active Army in 1940 and 1941.

During the interwar period the Regular Army had no large scale training exercises prior to 1940. The National Guard also never participated in large scale exercises, either with each other or with Regular Army units. But the lack of large scale exercises was not the major problem. When the first maneuver

exercises were held prior to World War II, the major deficiency noticed was the inadequate training at the individual, squad, and platoon levels rather than at the division and corps. It was found that prior to beginning collective training, the majority of the troops required at least 90 days refresher training in basic soldier skills.<sup>53</sup>

Frustration on budget authority as it applied to readiness apparently reached its culminating point during the early 1930's at the outset of the Roosevelt administration when the President attempted to reduce the size of the Army and its officer corps. There had been a longstanding confrontation between the Army, the Congress, and the President on how money should be spent. Congress felt that if it appropriated more money, the Army would spend it on more men and the civilian components and not on tanks or training.<sup>54</sup> MacArthur, on the other hand, was reluctant to put more money into anything but training leaders for an expansible Army. For that reason, even the possibility of redistributing funds into new areas such as an independent mechanized force was viewed unfavorably. In response to the pressures by Roosevelt, the Army reached its lowest point in training effectiveness when it programmed cuts in Regular Army field training, target practice, flight training, re-equipment programs, and R&D. What the Army protected was its strength, ROTC program, the National Guard, the Organized Reserve officer component, and the Army School system.<sup>55</sup>

**SUSTAINABILITY.** The Army's ability to sustain itself if it

became involved in a major conflict was based upon two assumptions. The first was the United States would have time to prepare for the conflict. The second was the United States' superior industrial production capability would outweigh any shortcomings in the current force. Though it is axiomatic that "in times of peace prepare for war," the United States did not fully use the 1920's and 1930's to prepare materially for the war in the 1940's. In actuality, the Army had more than enough time to raise and train the manpower it needed in 1942; on the other hand, it took two years to equip the force.

Few steps were taken to relieve equipment shortages in case of war. Initially the nation in the 1920's had a wealth of surplus material, albeit becoming more obsolescent as the decade went by. For that reason the Army believed it had insufficient justification, or sufficient need for that matter, to replenish its stocks. Mobilization planning in the 1920's and 1930's was based on the possibility the Army would have to return to Europe.<sup>56</sup> But the plans were unrealistic in the assumptions they made in terms of trained men and materiel available. As Marvin Kreidberg noted in his definitive study on the history of military mobilization,

*The mobilization plans from 1923 to 1936 were not based on realistic conditions-i.e., guns, ammunition, tanks, air planes, soldiers, etc.-but on phantoms which it was hoped could acquire substance in time to give reality to the entire superstructure based on them. The weakness and fallibility of this reasoning was its failure to evaluate properly the one overriding factor of time, which would be required to transform paper phantoms into the realistic tools of war.*<sup>57</sup>

In the 1930's MacArthur first set about to bring some realism to mobilization planning. Until that time the Army leadership and the General Staff refused to acknowledge logistical considerations would be the determining factor in tactics and strategy.<sup>58</sup> Studies done at the Army War college in the early 1920's noted the logistical supply rate was more important than the recruiting and training rate; however, the impact of the supply rate was not fully understood.<sup>59</sup> In MacArthur's studies, the focus was on having the trained manpower, particularly Regular Army officers, to meet the mobilization demands. In one 1930 War Department study, the G-1 showed that the number of Regular Army officers available would be insufficient to meet the minimum demands for mobilization as Army commanders had staffed their war time organizations at three times the most optimistic available rate.<sup>60</sup>

MacArthur also believed that mobilization planning should provide for a moderate-sized, ready and deployable force. Unfortunately this type of force required an increase in the Regular Army which was outside the realm of possibility. In 1933 while the staff was in the process of publishing unrealistic mobilization plans, MacArthur was telling Congress that the Army would be unable to meet its mobilization planning goals because of equipment and personnel. Mobilization plans of the 1920's and 1930's were thus Uptonian in their preoccupation with manpower and filling out a skeletonized Army.

It wasn't until the mid-1930' that a thorough review and

updating of plans began. The General Staff concluded that the Army could neither muster the forces nor the logistical support for its mobilization plans. General Malin Craig, MacArthur's successor, began to change the direction of the Army to concentrate on obtaining new weapons and supplies. He forced the Army to plan for a much smaller, fully equipped force, one which had the possibility of being supported by Congress and the President.<sup>61</sup>

**MODERNIZATION.** The basic philosophy which governed modernization during the interwar period was to spend what few dollars there were on research and development and perfecting prototypes without entering in full production. Consequently, significant progress was achieved in the development of technology despite the severe financial constraints imposed on the Army.<sup>62</sup>

Three distinct periods depict the Army and its attitude towards modernization during the interwar years. The first began after World War I and lasted throughout the 1920's. Congress and the Administration believed that the Army needed only to concentrate on perfecting prototype equipment such as the tank, the airplane, radio, and radar.<sup>63</sup> In cases such as the 105mm howitzer, which had been perfected, the large existing stocks of 75mm howitzer slowed the procurement of this new artillery piece. In another case, the desire for perfection and the enormous surpluses of Springfield rifles retarded the development of the Garand M-1 semi-automatic rifle which took 19 years to develop.<sup>64</sup>

This was also the period of Billy Mitchell's court martial

whose rebuffed ardent proponency for airpower as an emerging technology must have tempered the vigor of other advocates of new technologies. The Chief of Staff of the Army during this period, MG Summerall, formed an experimental mechanized force, however, the Army never could resolve the conflict of how much mobility vice firepower it needed, both for the force or for the tank. For both that reason and continued budget constraints the force remained experimental.

In the early 1930's, the Army entered the second period when existing stocks were becoming obsolete and new, modernized equipment was required, e.g., the tank, artillery pieces, airplanes, etc. Some in Congress complained the Army's slow pace of equipment modernization was also holding the Army back on its doctrine and organization. Representative Collins of Mississippi for example stated money should be spent on tanks, modern weapons, and airplanes not on manpower. He complained that the Army's emphasis on personnel, pay, and allowances was creating an increasingly obsolete Army.<sup>65</sup>

However, the Army leadership, and in particular MacArthur, when forced to choose between equipment or protecting the existing force size, opted for preserving the existing force. In his view, mechanization may have been fine, but it would not be pursued at the expense of training leaders, maintaining the existing strength, or training the civilian components. During the 16 year period between 1925 and 1940 the amount appropriated for the Army's budget totalled over 6 billion dollars. Of that



total 16% was spent on modernization. Two-thirds of this modernization money went to the Army Air Corps leaving the Army's ground component only 5%

In the mid to late 1930's, the Army, with an increasingly sympathetic Administration, started on the road to building a more realistic force, both in terms of equipment and manpower. This caused a change in policy as the Army began to devote more of its resources to procuring equipment rather than spending money on research and development. While the reduction in R&D spending was dramatic, the growth in procurement remained lackluster.<sup>66</sup> For example as late as 1939, when total Army funding was increasing, 42% of its budget went to pay and allowances, 30% went for nonmilitary purposes such as the Panama Canal and harbor and river works, while only 13% went to procurement of new equipment and less than 1% went to R&D.

Several other factors characterized modernization in the Army during the interwar period. First, research and development was decentralized. This decentralization often produced inefficiencies, however decentralization permitted flexibility, parallel developments, and the exploration of alternative paths of development.<sup>67</sup>

A second aspect was a clear direction did not exist on how to incorporate emerging technologies and the new weapon systems into the existing force. A case in point was the incorporation of and the role of tanks and airplanes with mechanized forces.<sup>68</sup> A third feature was the severed link between the research and

development and follow-on procurement. For the ground forces, instead of one supporting the other, the two were in competition. The ground component of the Army believed technology was always changing. To buy an existing version of equipment only meant spending scarce resource dollars on soon-to-be obsolete technology. The Air Corps, however, had the opposite view; they wanted to buy the best existing equipment in the greatest possible quantities. Army modernization and increased procurement during this period was always sacrificed to expanding the size of the force. As late as 1938 the Army unsuccessfully sought a 100,000 man increase while the Army Air Corps sought an increase of 10,000 more airplanes and received at least half of their request.

## LESSONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Contrasts and Parallels. Certain noticeable differences exists between the interwar years and today. The United States is a world leader, especially militarily, a position to which it neither desired nor aspired in the 1920's. Also, the United States is no longer as independent economically nor politically as it was in 1920. It has real economic, military, and political interests abroad affecting the daily existence of its citizens. The world too has changed with greater interdependence among nations and more global cooperation within the international community. The world has become unipolar, militarily, to the extent that the United States now is the greatest multidimensional force in the world.

However, with the severe economic burden placed on the use of military power for the United States as well as for other potential military powers, multinational and regional associations have grown more important in the resolution of disputes. Correspondingly, the United Nations' role in resolving international problems far exceeds that of the League of Nations.

There is also a limit to the unilateral leadership role the United States is willing to play more so because of the lack of a clear threat. That limit, last found during the interwar period and described earlier in this paper, continues to be the United States' historical inclinations towards isolationism, a small standing army, and pacifism.

Just as in 1920, the nation's tendency towards isolationism has reappeared with the end of the Cold War. In response, internationalists such as former President Nixon and Henry Kissinger are trying to sound a clarion call to oppose that tendency.<sup>69</sup> However, comments from both political parties are calling for America to come back home. Patrick Buchanan, the conservative aspirant of the Republican Party, has echoed this theme repeatedly during his campaign for the Presidency.<sup>70</sup> Congressional Democrats are likewise calling for the accelerated return of US forces from overseas bases.

At the same time the long standing aversion for large standing armies is also reappearing. As in the 1920's this disaffection is largely for economic reasons. The result is the Army looks towards bearing a disproportionate share of the manpower and budget reductions compared to the other services. Even as the Administration insists on protecting the planned strength of the Army, Congress is calling for more rapid and significant reductions in defense spending. As in the past, the deeper and quicker the cuts, the more the manpower of the active Army will be reduced.<sup>71</sup>

Lastly, the feelings of pacifism, though not as intense as in the 1920's, certainly exists today. Only one year ago a sizeable percentage of the American people were against our active military involvement in Kuwait, even when a substantial case was being made on the effects of the Iraqi's invasion to our vital national interests. Congress in fact reflected that

attitude when the Senate barely passed the resolution supporting the President in the use of military force to expel Iraq from Kuwait.<sup>72</sup>

Because of these traits, it is reasonable that the Army may face a new interwar period of diminished resources. Today's pro-defense political and military leaders are trying to shape arguments compelling enough to counter those traits. The National Security and Military Strategy and the testimony of the Secretary of Defense, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staffs, and the Service Secretaries and Chiefs of Staff during February and April of this year have demonstrated the rationale that the Defense Department is following to justify the "base force."<sup>73</sup> However, opponents, through the leaking of classified portions of these documents, are countering the process and the logic of the base force strategy with arguments which will lead to increased reductions.<sup>74</sup>

This debate over defense requirements sharpened by intense economic constraints sets the stage for a new interwar period. While the Army follows the strategy to protect its existing program before Congress, the Army should not neglect examining alternative courses of actions to prevent recurrence of the failures of the 1920's and 30's. The important point to understand is that the Army's base force is not necessarily the American public's view of what is required; is not necessarily accurate; and more meaningfully, will be the prevailing factor in determining the overall size of the Army.

National Military Strategy and the Budget Process. It is in the areas of national security policy formulation and the subsequent linking to the national military strategy that the United States has shown the greatest amount of improvement compared to the interwar period of the 1920's and 30's. Whereas during the interwar years the United States failed to articulate a national security policy, Congress has mandated that the Executive Branch publish a national security strategy from which the Department of Defense can form and define a national military strategy.

Within the Department of Defense, once that strategy is defined, it then becomes a matter of allocating resources in a balance manner among the four pillars of defense. The Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS) provides that methodology to link resources required to implement the national military strategy. Resources falling short of that strategy then help the Defense Department define to Congress the risk to US security interests.

During the interwar era, such a management system was nonexistent. No formal requirement existed for defining the national security and military strategy; within the War Department no formalized process existed to program resources against the perceived military strategy. Had the process existed it is debatable whether it would have made a difference. This was a period in which no significant threat existed to US vital interests and where the Army could not articulate what risks were associated with its level of unpreparedness. For example, the

Army attempted to make the case that it could not defend the Philippines, but failed to change either the policy or acquire adequate resources for defending it.

Today we find ourselves in a different predicament. The Army has an executive branch which provides the strategy and the linkage in budget allocation to apply that strategy. Nevertheless, there remains a breakdown in this linkage. That breakdown occurs in the fact that the strategy is not resource based, nor does it include the views of the legislative branch of government. While the current 2-year defense budget, provides some stability for the Army for its short term planning and execution, a longer term defense spending plan which reflects the broad consensus of the executive and legislative branch is needed to increase the reliability of the linkage of the National Military Strategy and the programs to execute that strategy. The 1990 budget agreement in which defense spending was fenced from other types of spending is an example of trying to reach that consensus, but it needs to be legislated into the budget process. As was recommended by the Service Secretaries in a jointly published document in 1988,

*For defense programming to be useful and realistic, and serve as a true reflection of support for previous developed military strategies and plans, the Congressional and Executive branches must reach an agreement on the level of fiscal resources which can be expected ....in the "out years"...failure to provide stability in fiscal resource planning..will lead to disconnects...between the National Military Strategy...and budgets...<sup>75</sup>*

Until this flaw in the process is corrected, the Army over

the next few decades may face the same situation it confronted during the interwar period in which its resources were not tied to a strategy. Just as in the interwar period, the Army may continue to find the budget formulation process will become more incremental than it is today, yielding unimaginative and conservative programs. Similarly, strategic thought may revert to the insurance theory of preparedness in which the amount of risk while accepted is unknown.

FORCE STRUCTURE. During the interwar period the Army became wedded to a force structure which was clearly insupportable. Rather than reducing structure, the War Department maintained it without giving adequate thought to the subsequent implications of an untrained, undermanned, and underequipped force.

The Army today is avoiding this trap by matching its 33% manpower reduction with a similar 33% reduction in the number of divisions. If resources continue to be reduced, parallel decreases will presumably continue. However, there may be a point beyond which the Army will return to its Uptonian tradition of a skeletonized force structure to protect active duty strength. At this juncture, the Army needs to resist that urge, draw on its experience during the interwar period, and recognize the distinction between the expandable Army of Upton and Root and the citizen Army of Palmer. Half-hearted attempts at both is dysfunctional as in the end the Army will have reserve and active components unable to perform their given missions.

The Army, even today, is showing signs of trying to protect



its active structure at the expense of reserve structure. The rationale is that the reserve structure should be reduced because the active structure no longer has missions requiring reserve support structure. With the exception of the National Guard Bureau and their congressional supporters, no thought is being given on how the reserve components could take on additional active missions. The underlying force structure strategy is that reserve component missions are distinct, separate, and unique to the reserve components. The active force is the fighting force; the reserve force is the support and backup force. The active force cannot afford to provide its own support; the reserve force cannot provide deployable fighting forces quickly. This philosophy, almost Uptonian, served the Army well during the cold War when both the active force and reserve force structure were complementary and robust. In the future, if resources are further constrained, a new bases, more along the lines of the citizen Army of Palmer, may need to be followed.

In summary, to avoid repeating the 1920's and 30's, both active and reserve structure must be linked more to equipment than to available manpower; the Army must keep its deployed and rapid reaction units at ready and at full strength; and the Army must search out innovative ways in which reserve structure can assume missions from the existing active structure.

**READINESS.** Several realities emerge from a study of the Army during the interwar period. The first is that leadership training provides the basis for the future Army and must be

protected. The difference between today and the 1920's, however, is that leadership training is not only for officers but applies to the noncommissioned officer corps as well. Just as the World War II Army benefitted from the training and education of its future officers in the 1920's and 30's, the Army must continue to concentrate its efforts on the professional non-commissioned officer (NCO). This is required for two reasons. First is the tremendous technological change between the two periods. Today's NCO has a more complex and challenging range of duties than the NCO of that era. The second reason was demonstrated during the Vietnam War when the Army tried to fill its NCO shortages with "shake and bake" NCO's. The leadership requirements for the junior and mid-level NCO are as demanding relatively speaking as that of the Army's company and field grade level officers and needs to be similarly protected.

The second element affecting readiness is that training a force takes less time than equipping one. When it comes to balancing manpower and equipment dollars, it is necessary to ensure that the force is properly equipped and that the manpower which will reconstitute the force has ready access to modernized equipment. It should be remembered that it took over two years to equip the World War II force, not two years to train it.

Third, large scale unit training is more perishable and more expensive compared to individual, small unit, and leadership training. During the interwar years, collective training at the brigade and higher level was nonexistent resulting in the

inability of large formations to operate. However before that training could be resumed, a large amount of time and emphasis had to be placed on the individual and small unit training which had also been neglected.

Fourth, forces deployed overseas must be ready, supportable, and defensible. To station our forces or deploy them in an area which is known to be insupportable as was done in the Philippines provides the seeds of disaster. These forces serve no deterrent value, provide little impediment to a hostile force, and may in fact encourage the aggression it is designed to prevent.

**SUSTAINABILITY.** The two underlying premises of the interwar Army concerning sustainment were: (1) the Army would have time to mobilize its manpower for a conflict and (2) the United States' industrial capacity would offset whatever deficiencies in materiel and supplies existed in the Army. While true for that era, this is not the case today. Minor and major regional contingencies will require more timely actions and deployments. In the event of multiple regional conflicts or a major global conflict, the United States industrial base will be much less robust to meet the sustainment needs of the Army. The more likely regional contingencies will not afford the Army the time to prepare for the war. For the more unlikely regional or global conflict, the industrial base will have difficulty in gearing up to meet the needs of the Army.

Another lesson of the interwar period is that the Army can only live off existing equipment and supply stocks for a

specified period, anywhere from ten to fifteen years. Today, just as in 1920, the Army has developed large stockpiles of equipment and supplies compared to its projected force structure; consequently, there is no overriding need to purchase more equipment and supplies. Though this stockpile may be adequate in the short term, as time passes, the Army will use their stockpiled equipment and supplies at a rate greater than its replenishment rate. Similar to a person who lives off the principal in a savings account rather than the interest, the Army in the 21st Century may find itself in need of expending vast amounts of dollars first to reconstruct the industrial base and second to rebuild its equipment and supply stocks.

**MODERNIZATION.** There is evidence that the Army is in danger of repeating the errors of the interwar period. During the twenty year interwar era, the advantages the Army reaped from its over reliance on research and development were offset by its failure to procure equipment. Today the Army is following a strategy of weighing research and development of prototypes at the expense of procurement.<sup>76</sup> While the Department of Defense can make a strong case that this strategy is proper during a period of constrained resources, the danger exists that the Army will repeat the same errors of the interwar period.

These errors come about when research and development dollars are in competition rather than complementing procurement dollars. First, as long as the technological difference between prototype models and fielded equipment is insignificant such a

strategy makes sense; however, as the difference widens, the risks that the fielded force does not have the capability associated with the prototype equipment increases. The Army goes untrained on the new equipment, further exacerbating the mobilization problem. This was the case with a range of equipment developed during the 1920's and 1930's, e.g., armor, anti-armor, the M-1 rifle, the 105mm howitzer, etc.

Secondly, the industrial base which is needed to build new equipment goes neglected. Modernized factories and plants are not built, tools and machinery are not produced, and the skilled labor to manufacture this equipment is not available or trained.

Lastly, tactical concepts and operational capabilities will fail to keep up with the development of new technically advanced equipment. This occurred during the interwar period when the Army could never decide what the proper role of the tank should be. While some desired a light mobile tank capable of acting as an independent force, others wanted a heavy tank to be used as a supporter of infantry. Without adequate procurement and testing, neither concept was justified and the Army's tank development suffered in contrast to other European nations.

In summary during a period of great technological change, these modernization problems can have disastrous consequences if procurement fails to keep pace with research and development.

## CONCLUSION

The Army confronts today the same choices to balance structure, manpower, materiel, and readiness as the Army between the World Wars faced. In the 1920's and 30's, the Army sided with protecting manpower and structure, choosing to sacrifice the readiness of the force and its ability to be sustained and equipped. This decision, de facto or otherwise, was done without regard to the long term effects of that policy on the Army's ability to fight. These choices led not only to the defeat and capture of the United States Army in the Philippines but to the Army's embarrassing losses at Kasserine Pass a short time later. The Army had made decisions which decreased the readiness of the active and reserve forces as well as limiting the modernization of the forces it deployed to Africa.

Could the Army in 1941 have been a better, more balanced force given the same resources? Twenty-twenty hindsight would always answer this rhetorical question "yes." However, the more meaningful question is what can the Army do today to avoid the same pitfalls?

There are several impressions which come to mind. The first is the Army should not make protection of active duty structure its predominant objective. Protecting structure at the expense of adequately manning or training the force makes little sense. Such a force will repeat the hollowness of the Army of the 30's. More important to the long term health of the Army than manning or training the force is the equipping and modernization of the

force. The interwar period showed that manpower could be generated relatively quickly. Also it was not the complex, expensive training at brigade and higher levels which needed the most emphasis, but the simpler, cheaper individual and small unit training which needed to be accomplished.

A second impression is that as resources become increasingly harder to come by, the reserve force gains in importance. This means that these reserve forces should have the equipment, training, and leadership to assume missions previously assigned to active forces.

A third impression is that the Army should not sever research and development from acquisition in order to perfect prototype equipment as an excuse for not deploying it. One of the success stories of the Army in the late 70's and early 80's was its ability to field quickly, still unperfected equipment, e.g., MLRS, Apache. This strategy quickly placed the equipment in the hands of soldiers who improve it as time passed. This strategy at the same time provides the Army the opportunity to use emerging technology to test out new concepts and organizations.

Another impression is the Army must not sacrifice innovativeness. It must realize that there are no sacred cows and that the principal of equifinality indeed exists. There are many different ways of reaching a solution and the Army should actively search and offer decision-makers a wide-range of possible solutions; e.g., cadre active units, deployable reserve

units, increase active structure in reserve component units, etc.

The last impression is one which deals in trust. The Congress and the President need to provide a stable environment for the Army to build its long range plans. Similarly the Army must be open in its thinking, presenting a range of options from which the Congress can select. This may have to include a variety of branch and sequels from which the Congress and President can choose if circumstances changes. At the same time the Army leadership must have the courage of their convictions and if necessary follow MacArthur's example in the 1930's if decision are made inimical not to the Army's but to the nation's best interests.

The Army during the interwar period did some things right, primarily furnishing the strategic leaders and vision needed to win World War II. However, resources were wasted building the wrong force. Too much was spent on manning and structure, while not enough was spent on equipping, sustaining, and modernizing the force. The Army in the 21st Century would do well to learn those lessons.



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